

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Smart Machine Technologies Inc.

GENEDGE ALLIANCE

Smart Machine Technologies, Inc. Partners with GENEDGE ALLIANCE to Improve Quality and Grow Sales

Client Profile:

Founded in 1989, Smart Machines is a world-class designer, fabricator, manufacturer and installer of custom-made machinery and build-to-print applications. They utilize the latest technology to conceptualize, design, engineer, and manufacture solutions for a variety of industries worldwide. The company has successfully diversified from their origins in textiles and film into industries that include food and beverage, tobacco, aggregate and others. Smart Machine employs 80 people at its facility in Martinsville, Virginia.

Situation:

Smart Machine's strengths include world-class capabilities in stainless and carbon steel fabrication, a 35-ton overhead crane, full machine shop capabilities and a modern wet paint booth with a flexible work force. A new management team had a vision for growth and a commitment to capital investment. Challenges included quality issues with some existing customers not completely satisfied with product quality. The company hired new employees to meet the needs of its expanding customer base; however, some of them lacked the appropriate level of experience and skill. Smart Machine contacted GENEDGE ALLIANCE, formerly Virginia's Philpott Manufacturing Extension Partnership (VPMEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to help identify opportunities for improvement to their current Quality Management System and provide professional development of their Quality Manager and other key employees.

Solution:

GENEDGE ALLIANCE's Sales Manager Jim Simons made Smart Machines aware of Virginia's Small Manufacturing Assistance Program (VSMAAP), collaboration with Virginia Tech that provides financial assistance to help co-fund projects that retain and create manufacturing jobs. Mr. Simons arranged for GENEDGE ALLIANCE Project Manager John Hudson to meet with company personnel, and together they outlined an approach that included: 1) review of the company's quality manual for content, organization and procedures; 2) analyze data collection methods and documentation; 3) examine documentation for movement and traceability of shop orders through manufacturing; 4) evaluate procedures that determine material rework needs and assist in implementation of root cause analysis tools; 5) assess staffing levels for proper quality function support; and 6) provide ongoing mentoring to support the Quality Manager's professional development. The project resulted in improved non-conformance reporting and action, increased use of root cause analysis, and development of a full-time inspector position.

Results:

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- * Retained sales of \$800,000.
- * Increased sales of \$300,000.
- * Created 25 new jobs.

Testimonial:

"This project had significant positive effect for our firm and assisted with my professional development. Other projects with GENEDGE ALLIANCE have been helpful, and we are eager to continue the relationship."

Todd Peters, Quality Manager